AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-45. (Canceled)

46. (Currently amended) A laser comprising:

first and second electrodes provided at different elevations and which are approximately parallel to one another,

first and second sectional sidewalls provided at least partially between the first and second electrodes,

~~a laser waveguide including~~ an elongated cavity defined between opposing major surfaces of the first and second electrodes and between the first and second sidewalls, and wherein an optical axis of the laser is defined at least partially in the elongated cavity along a lengthwise direction of the cavity so that the optical axis is provided between opposing approximately parallel surfaces of the first and second electrodes,

at least one protrusion on the first and/or second electrode, the protrusion extending into the cavity ~~of the laser waveguide~~ from the first and/or second electrode so that the protrusion extends from a main body of the first and/or second electrode into the cavity in a direction transverse to the optical axis of the laser.

47. (Previously presented) The laser of claim 46, wherein protrusions are formed on each of the first and second electrodes.

48. (Currently amended) The laser of claim 46, wherein each of the first and second sectional sidewalls comprises respective adjacent sections of ~~the first sectional~~ sidewall that abut one another so as to be in contact with each other.

49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently amended) The laser of claim 46, wherein each of the first and second sectional sidewalls comprises respective adjacent sections of ~~the first sectional~~ sidewall that are spaced apart from one another.

51. (Previously presented) The laser of claim 46, where the at least one protrusion aids in starting characteristics of the laser by increasing the electric field in localized region(s) of the cavity.

52. (Currently amended) The laser of claim 46, wherein the ~~waveguide~~ laser is a CO_2 waveguide laser that uses a gaseous lasing material comprising CO_2.

53. (Previously presented) The laser of claim 46, wherein the sidewalls comprise ceramic.

54. (Previously presented) The laser of claim 53, wherein the sidewalls comprise one of BeO, Al_2O_3 and/or AlN.

55. (Previously presented) The laser of claim 46, wherein respective sections of the sidewalls are less than 200 mm in length.

56. (Currently amended) The laser of claim 46, wherein an electromagnetic field is caused by an oscillating current supplied to at least one of the electrodes such that the electromagnetic field is provided in the cavity ~~of the waveguide~~.

57. (New) The laser of claim 46, wherein the cavity has length, height and width dimensions, and wherein the protrusion extends from the main body of the first and/or second electrode in a direction perpendicular to a direction corresponding to the length of the cavity.

58. (New) The laser of claim 46, wherein the first electrode is at a top side but not a bottom side of the elongated cavity, and the second electrode is at a bottom side but not a top side of the elongated cavity.

59. (New) The laser of claim 46, wherein the first and/or second electrodes extend along substantially the entire length of the cavity.

60. (New) The laser of claim 46, wherein the protrusion extends from the main body of the first and/or second electrode in a direction orthogonal to a direction in which gas extends through the cavity.

61. (New) The laser of claim 46, wherein the protrusion extends from the main body of the first and/or second electrode in a direction orthogonal to a length of the cavity.

62. (New) The laser of claim 46, wherein the protrusion extends further into the cavity than does any other part of the electrode on which the protrusion is provided.

63. (New) The laser of claim 46, wherein the protrusion protrudes from a flat major surface of the first and/or second electrode, and wherein other portions of the flat major surface not supporting the protrusion help define the cavity.

64. (New) A laser comprising:

first and second electrodes,

first and second sectional sidewalls provided at least partially between the first and second electrodes,

an elongated cavity defined between at least opposing major surfaces of the first and second electrodes and between the first and second sidewalls, and wherein the first and second electrodes are continuous and are each provided along the entire length of the cavity,

at least one protrusion on the first and/or second electrode, the protrusion extending into the cavity from the first and/or second electrode so that the protrusion extends from a main body of the first and/or second electrode into the cavity in a direction transverse to an optical axis of the laser, and wherein the first electrode is provided at a top side but not a bottom side of the elongated cavity, and the second electrode is at a bottom side but not a top side of the elongated cavity.

65. (New) The laser of claim 64, wherein the optical axis of the laser is defined at least partially in the elongated cavity along a lengthwise direction of the cavity.

66. (New) The laser of claim 64, wherein the optical axis is provided between opposing approximately parallel surfaces of the first and second electrodes.

67. (New) The laser of claim 64, wherein the protrusion extends further into the cavity than does any other part of the electrode on which the protrusion is provided.

68. (New) The laser of claim 64, wherein the protrusion protrudes from a flat major surface of the first and/or second electrode, and wherein other portions of the flat major surface not supporting the protrusion help define the cavity.

69. (New) The laser of claim 64, wherein the laser is a waveguide laser.